



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2006

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
HERBERT HADAD, MEGAN GAFFNEY
HEATHER TASKER, BRIDGET KELLY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**U.S. CHARGES ACTING BOSS AND OVER 30 MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES
OF THE GENOVESE ORGANIZED CRIME FAMILY WITH RACKETEERING AND
OTHER OFFENSES INCLUDING MURDER, EXTORTION, NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKING, AND FIREARMS TRAFFICKING**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, MARK J. MERSHON, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Office of the FBI, JANET DiFIORE, the Westchester County District Attorney, and RAYMOND KELLY, the Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, announced the unsealing in Manhattan federal court earlier today of a 42-count indictment, captioned United States v. Liborio S. Bellomo, et al., S1 06 Cr. 08 (LAK) (the "Indictment"). The Indictment charges 32 defendants, including an Acting Boss and various members and associates of the Genovese Organized Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra, with wide-ranging racketeering crimes and other offenses spanning more than a decade, including murder, violent extortions of various individuals and businesses, labor racketeering, obstruction of justice, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and firearms trafficking. The Indictment, which targets factions of the Genovese Organized Crime Family based in the Bronx, East Harlem, and Westchester, is the result of a Federal investigation that began in 2003, and a related investigation by state authorities in Westchester County that began in 2005.

The Indictment charges LIBORIO S. BELLOMO, a/k/a "Barney Bellomo," JOHN ARDITO, a/k/a "Buster," RALPH BALSAMO, a/k/a "the Undertaker," a/k/a "Skully," SALVATORE LARCA, a/k/a "Sal," GERALD FIORINO, a/k/a "Jerry," VINCENT RUSSO, a/k/a "Vinny," and ALBERT TRANQUILLO, JR., a/k/a "Allie Boy," with racketeering offenses based on their participation in the affairs of the Genovese Organized Crime Family. Specifically, the Indictment alleges that BELLOMO served as Acting Boss of the Genovese Family throughout much of the 1990s and has remained a powerful member of the Family through the present, despite his incarceration following a conviction on extortion charges in this

District in 1996. While he was incarcerated in 1998, BELLOMO authorized and sanctioned the murder of Ralph Coppola, a former Genovese Family Soldier and Acting Capo, who had been in BELLOMO's "crew." The murder charge against BELLOMO is punishable by death; however, the Department of Justice has not yet determined whether to seek the death penalty for BELLOMO.

Also unsealed today was the guilty plea in July 2005 of long-time Genovese Family associate, and attorney, PETER J. PELUSO. PELUSO pled guilty to participating in numerous crimes committed by the Genovese Family, including racketeering, extortion and obstruction of justice. One of the ways that PELUSO assisted members of the Genovese Family in committing these crimes was by employing his status as an attorney to deliver important messages to and from members of the Family, some of whom were incarcerated. Members and associates of the Genovese Family believed that these communications were less likely to be subject to law enforcement surveillance because of PELUSO's status as an attorney. Among other crimes, PELUSO pleaded guilty to participating in the murder of Coppola. Specifically, PELUSO admitted that he carried the message from the imprisoned BELLOMO to other leaders of the Genovese Family that sanctioned and led to the murder of Coppola. As set forth in the transcript of his guilty plea allocution, PELUSO pled guilty pursuant to a cooperation agreement with the Government.

Numerous other made members and trusted associates of the Genovese Family are charged in the Indictment as well. Long-time Capo JOHN ARDITO is charged with racketeering crimes including extortion, obstruction of justice, witness tampering, and money laundering. Genovese Family Soldier RALPH BALSAMO is charged with racketeering offenses, as well obstruction of justice, the operation of an illegal gambling business, narcotics distribution and firearms trafficking. In addition, it is alleged that BALSAMO frequently met with other members and associates of the Genovese Family at the funeral parlor that he operates in the Bronx. Genovese Family Soldier SALVATORE LARCA is charged with obstruction of justice, as well as a labor racketeering scheme with ARDITO and BALSAMO, in which they attempted to corruptly influence certain elected officials of Local 15 of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Also charged with racketeering offenses is GERALD FIORINO, an associate of the Genovese Family and BELLOMO's brother-in-law, who is alleged to have participated in a money laundering scheme with ARDITO, as well as an attempted extortion, together with Soldier LOUIS MOSCATIELLO and associate PASQUALE SPERDUTO, of the owner of a construction company. VINCENT RUSSO, a proposed member of the Genovese Family, is also charged with

being part of the racketeering enterprise by participating, together with ARDITO, BALSAMO and LARCA, in a scheme to tamper with a victim of a violent assault at a construction site, whose ear had been partially bitten off in a fight with another Genovese Family Soldier. RUSSO is also charged with participating in an extortion of the owner of a bakery, together with ARDITO and ANGELO AQUILLINO, the President of Local 102 of the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers' Union. ALBERT TRANQUILLO, JR., a Genovese Family associate, is charged as part of the racketeering enterprise with carrying out three violent extortions relating to a business that he ran called A&D Carting, also called Transcamp Carting, which maintained contracts to haul trash, dirt and concrete for various entities.

Genovese Family Soldier ALBERT "Chinky" FACCHIANO, a member of the Florida faction of the Family, is charged with participating in a scheme, together with BELLOMO and ARDITO, to locate a suspected cooperating witness in order to prevent the witness's testimony at a Federal criminal trial in the Summer of 2002. Genovese Family Capo ARTHUR NIGRO, together with Soldier PASQUALE "Scop" DELUCA, is charged with participating in an extortion of the owner and operator of a piece of commercial rental property. Genovese Family Genovese Acting Capo ANTHONY "Rom" ROMANELLO is charged with the extortion of the owner and operator of a bakery.

Finally, the Indictment alleges that BALSAMO oversaw a large-scale cocaine distribution network, which was managed and operated by two associates of the Family, ANDREW SHEA and Michael "Chunk" Londonio, and which employed numerous "runners," also charged in the Indictment, who distributed the cocaine throughout the Bronx and Westchester. Also charged in the narcotics conspiracy are JOHN TOMERO, a primary source of cocaine for this drug conspiracy, and JOSEPH DEROSA, a cocaine customer who then distributed the cocaine, who were arrested on December 6, 2005, pursuant to federal warrants. Also on December 6, 2005, pursuant to an arrest warrant obtained by the Westchester County District Attorney's Office, law enforcement agents attempted to arrest Londonio at his residence in the Bronx. During the execution of this arrest warrant, Londonio fired numerous shots at two New York State Troopers, hitting one in the head and chest (who was saved from serious injuries because he was wearing bullet-proof armor) and hitting and injuring the other Trooper in the leg. The arresting officers then returned fire, and Londonio was killed. In addition, pursuant to a search of Londonio's apartment, numerous firearms, dozens of rounds of ammunition, and a live grenade were found. In this regard, BALSAMO, LARCA, SHEA, and SAMMY LOPEZ are also charged with firearms trafficking with Londonio.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Westchester County District Attorney's Office, and the New York City Police Department, in this investigation. In addition, Mr. GARCIA expressed his appreciation to the Putnam County District Attorney and the Putnam County Sheriff's Offices for their assistance in this investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys MIRIAM E. ROCAH, JONATHAN KOLODNER, and ERIC J. SNYDER are in charge of the prosecutions.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

06-029

###